

*Dealing with the Federal Government can seem like a formidable task at times. However, with a little patience, persistence and perseverance on your part -- your efforts will be rewarded in the long run. To assist you, we developed a series of procedural steps essential for success. Good Luck!*

### **1. Become familiar with the SBA/GC Internet Homepage.**

The SBA offers a wide array of programs and “hands-on” assistance to small businesses considering the federal marketplace. Go to our website at <http://www.sba.gov/bussinessop/index.html> and familiarize yourself with the programs and services we offer. From this site you can identify local SBA contracting experts who can be an invaluable resource to you, whether you are new to government contracting or are currently doing business with the Government and are seeking advice on how to deal with a particular issue. From the “Resources and Opportunities” section on our website, you will find links to additional procurement-related programs and assistance. In addition, this site provides information about other SBA resources including Small Business Development Centers, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and Women’s Business Development Centers. Log onto the SBA/GC website today and find out why we believe that it is truly the entrance ramp to the Government’s procurement Super-Highway.

### **2. Determine if your firm qualifies for one of SBA’s Certification Programs.**

Formal certification by small business concerns is not required to bid on Federal contracts. Firms self-certify that they are small at the time of bid/proposal submission. The SBA currently has 3 contracts-related certification programs. Our 8(a) Business Development program assists eligible small businesses to compete through business development assistance. Although primarily a business development program, there are certain contracts restricted to certified 8(a) concerns. Certification in our Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) and Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) programs entitles qualified firms to special bidding benefits in the Federal-contracting arena.

The SBA offers an on-line application process that makes it easier, faster and less expensive for small firms to apply for 8(a) Business Development, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) and HUBZone certification directly from SBA’s website, eliminating the need to download and complete a “paper” application. The applications are 100% Web-based, which incorporates context sensitive help, real-time validation, printer-ready versions and integrates with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database.

To learn more about these programs and to determine if your firm qualifies for 8(a), SDB, or HUBZone certification go to the appropriate SBA website (<http://www.sba.gov/8abd>;

<http://www.sba.gov/sdb>) and,

<http://www.sba.gov/hubzone>)

Although not a formal certification program, in May 2004, the SBA announced a new procurement program that will boost federal contract opportunities for service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) concerns. Under the new rule contracting officers *may* restrict contract awards to SDVOSBs where there is a reasonable expectation that two or more SDVOSB concerns will submit bids at a fair market price. If the anticipated contract price will not exceed \$3 million (or \$5 million for manufacturing contracts) the new rules allow for a sole-source award, if there is not a reasonable expectation of competitive bids/offers from 2 or more SDVOSB concerns. The rule allows SDVOSB concerns to self-certify. Any challenge to a concern’s status as a small business or as a SVOSB must be referred to the SBA for resolution. To view the new rule, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/fredpdfs/04-09727.pdf>

### **3. Obtain a DUNS Number, and register in the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR) and Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) Systems.**

If you do not already have a “DUNS Number,” contact Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) at <http://www.dnb.com/> to obtain one. Your DUNS Number is an important “identifier”, used for a multitude of purposes by the Government in the contracting arena.

The Government’s Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database holds information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. CCR affords you the opportunity for fast electronic payment of your invoices. You must be registered in CCR to be awarded a Federal contract. To learn more about CCR log onto the website at <http://www.ccr.gov> On January 1, 2004, the SBA’s Procurement and Marketing Access Network (PRO-Net) was integrated into CCR to provide a single portal to assist small businesses with marketing their goods and services to the Federal government. The CCR-PRO-Net linkage is part of a

comprehensive strategy to transfer PRO-Net's functions to the E-Gov Business Partner Network (BPN) in order to simplify government-wide vendor registration. The BPN is part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), one of the e-government initiatives to create integrated business processes for buyers and sellers in the federal marketplace. For more information about IAE, visit the website at <http://egov.gsa.gov>

The Government has implemented the Online Certifications and Representations Application (ORCA) initiative to replace the paper based representations and certifications (more commonly referred to as "reps and certs") process required with the submission of each sealed bid (IFB) or request for proposal (RFP). Now using ORCA, a prospective contractor can enter their reps and certs information over the web once and will then be able to submit them electronically from the web. This is a mandatory requirement and firms must review/update their data at least once annually or as circumstances change. The ORCA website can be found by going to <http://www.bpn.gov> and clicking on "Online Reps and Certs" on the left side of the screen.

#### **4. Identify your product or service.**

It is helpful to know the Federal Supply Classification Code (FSC) and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code for your product or service. Many government product/service listings and future procurements are identified by FSC. To identify FSCs applicable to your company log onto <http://www.scrantonrtg.com/secrc/fsc-codes/fsc.html>. Detailed information regarding NAICS can be found on the SBA website by clicking onto: [https://eweb1.sba.gov/naics/dsp\\_naicssearch2.cfm](https://eweb1.sba.gov/naics/dsp_naicssearch2.cfm). **NOTE:** Small Business Size Standards for all Federal Government programs formerly associated with Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes were replaced by those that SBA has established for industries as described in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). SBA has established a new table of small business size standards based on NAICS [www.sba.gov/size/](http://www.sba.gov/size/)

#### **5. Identify current Federal procurement opportunities.**

Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOps) <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/> – the designated government-wide point of entry- is the exclusive official source for public access to notices of Federal contracting actions over \$25,000. (Agencies are encouraged to use FedBizOps to provide notices for actions of \$25,000 or less). Notices of proposed procurements were formerly publicized in the Commerce Business Daily (CBD). However, with FedBizOps designation as the one-stop Internet gateway to procurement opportunities, the CBD has ceased publication. Once you identify those Agencies and buying offices that purchase your products and services, it's a good idea to contact them directly to learn more about upcoming procurements (i.e., procurement forecasts) posted on websites or electronic bulletin boards.

#### **6. Familiarize yourself with the Government's contracting procedures**

Be familiar with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) (<http://www.arnet.gov/far>) and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/dars/>. You can also get access to other Federal agency FAR supplements from their respective webpages.

#### **7. Investigate Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts.**

The General Services Administration (GSA) manages Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) contracts, also known as Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts. Under MAS/FSS, contracts are awarded to multiple companies supplying comparable products and services at pre-negotiated prices, terms and conditions. Once GSA awards the contracts, Federal contracting officers and other authorized users order directly from the Schedule contractor. Many Federal purchases are, in fact, orders on MAS/FSS contracts. Contact the General Services Administration (GSA) for information on how to obtain a MAS/FSS contract:

<http://www.fss.gsa.gov/> (Be sure that your marketing information and CCR profile contains information on any MAS/FSS contracts held by your firm).

#### **8. Seek additional assistance as needed in the Federal marketplace.**

There are a number of important resources that are available to provide you with "hands-on" assistance in the Federal marketplace:

**-SBA Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs) and Commercial Marketing Representatives (CMRs)** SBA has a nationwide cadre of procurement professionals who are charged with assisting small businesses and acting as their advocates at both the prime and subcontracting levels. PCRs assist small firms interested in doing business, as prime

contractors, directly with Federal agency buying offices. Our CMRs work with those small firms interested in identifying subcontracting opportunities with large businesses that have been awarded a Federal contract. To identify the PCR or CMR located nearest to you go to <http://www.sba.gov/gc/indexcontacts.html>.

**Procurement Technical Assistance Centers** ([www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm](http://www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm)) are located in most States. Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, while funded by the Department of Defense, provide technical contracting and marketing assistance to small businesses wishing to do business with any federal agencies. They provide training and counseling on marketing, financial, and contracting issues at minimal or no cost.

**-Small Business Specialists** are located at each Federal buying office and can provide assistance on how to market to that Agency. An addendum to this document contains a listing of Small Business Specialists (sometimes referred to as SADBUS) in your state. A complete listing of Small Business Specialists can be obtained from each Agency's website. For example, links to the homepages of every DOD activity can be found on the **DefenseLink website**: <http://www.defenselink.mil/>. This information can be invaluable in researching the Federal marketplace and identifying your target market. Links to **Agency Procurement Forecasts** (<http://www.sba.gov/GC/forecast.html>) and other program information are available on their individual websites.

## **9. Explore subcontracting opportunities**

Regardless of your product or service it is important that you do not neglect our very large secondary market, Subcontracting Opportunities with Federal Prime Contractors. Be sure to check out our website at <http://www.sba.gov/GC/indexcontacts-sbsd.html>. The SBA/GC Subcontracting Opportunities Directory lists, by State, large business Federal prime contractors along with the name and telephone number of each firm's Small Business Liaison Officer (SBLO). We encourage you to investigate potential opportunities with these firms. Many of these firms also have websites that may be useful and we encourage you to contact their respective SBLO for subcontracting and teaming opportunities. The SBA's SUB-Net (<http://web.sba.gov/subnet>) is a valuable source for obtaining information on subcontracting opportunities.

## **10. Investigate other Federal programs.**

There are several other programs that may be of interest to you, such as individual Agency Mentor-Protégé Programs, the SBA's Small Business Innovation Research Program <http://www.sba.gov/sbir/indexsbir-sttr.html>, etc. Information on these and other programs is available on Agency websites <http://www.sba.gov/gc/indexresources.html>, and "click on" miscellaneous links to other Federal Government Acquisition sites.

## **11. Accept credit cards**

More than 250,000 Federal employees are using the GSA Smartpay cards. As a vendor you can maximize your ability to capture government sales by accepting credit cards (Visa, MasterCard and Voyager). If you already accept these cards, you have no additional work to do. If you do not accept these cards contact a bank to establish a merchant account. For more information, visit GSA's website at [estrategy.gov/smartgov/smart\\_card.cfm](http://estrategy.gov/smartgov/smart_card.cfm).

## **12. Market, Market, Market!**

The 3 most important words to remember in order to be successful in the Federal Procurement Arena is market, market, market. Hopefully, this guide will have given you some good ideas on how to market your firm. After you have identified your customers, researched their requirements, and familiarized yourself with the Government's procurement regulations and strategies, it is time to market your product or service. Present your capabilities directly to those buying offices that purchase your products or services. Realize that, like you, their time is valuable and if the match is a good one and you can provide them with a cost-effective, quality solution to their requirements the contract could be yours. Good luck and remember – you're not alone.

## **PART 2 - SELLING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

### ***CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FEDERAL PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS***

The United States Government is the world's largest buyer of goods and services. It is a very large and diverse market with many procurement activities located in Washington, DC and throughout the country. The federal government market is divided into two major areas for purchasing, civilian and military.

#### **CIVILIAN MARKET**

The major civilian agency that buys for the federal government is the General Services Administration (GSA). GSA has ten Business Service Center Regional Offices located around the country to assist firms in doing business with the agency.

For assistance, contact the GSA at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) website or contact:

#### **GSA National Customer Service Center (NCSC)**

(800) 488-3111

Fax (816) 926-6952

[NCSCcustomer.service@gsa.gov](mailto:NCSCcustomer.service@gsa.gov)

GSA manages the Federal Supply Schedules Program. Federal Supply Schedules are indefinite quantity contracts that allow federal agencies to order commercial products and services from approved vendors. The Federal Supply Schedule system is an excellent way for small business to obtain contract purchase orders from federal agencies. Information on how to become a federal supply schedule contractor is available at <http://www.fss.gsa.gov>

Once your firm receives a Federal Supply Service contract, GSA will provide you with a listing of contacts at government buying offices that you can use to directly market your products or services. You are encouraged to aggressively market your firm in this manner. Local buying offices can order directly from your FSS contact without the need of further soliciting other firms.

Also, GSA has a new Internet system of buying from schedule contractors called “e-Buy”. For schedule contractors, e-Buy provides greater opportunities to offer quotes and increase business volume for services and products provided under their schedule contracts. You can access e-Buy at the following web site:

<http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/channelView.do?pageTypeId=8199&channelPage=%2Fep%2Fchannel%2FgsaOverview.jsp&channelId=-13828>

Also, federal procurement opportunities can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>. A search engine is available at this web site to browse the latest contract solicitations. You can enter your e-mail address into the Vendor Notification System on this web page. This will allow your firm to automatically receive solicitations from agencies in the area you chose.

Another federal civilian acquisition agency that purchases large dollar amounts of goods and services is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Information concerning small business contracting opportunities at this agency can be found at <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forindustry/smallbiz/index.html>. Also, the NASA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) web page at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codek/> contains important information for small and minority owned businesses seeking contracts.

Other Federal agencies that buy products and services maybe located through the Federal Acquisition Jumpstation at: <http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/pub/fedproc/home.html>

### **MILITARY MARKET**

The Department of Defense (DOD) buys its goods and services through procurement centers located throughout the country. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Defense Logistics Agency are the principal buying agencies for DOD.

Marketing information on doing business with the Department of Defense can be found at the web site: [http://www.defenselink.mil/other\\_info/business.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/other_info/business.html). The Department of Defense procurement opportunities can be located on the Internet at the web site <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/>

### **CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION**

As of January 1, 2004, Federal Acquisition Regulations require prospective federal contractors to be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) prior to the award of a contract. You can register your firm in the CCR by visiting the Internet web site at <http://www.ccr.gov>

### **SBA PROGRAMS**

Within DoD's CCR network is an SBA resource called the "Dynamic Small Business Search" (DSBS) program, formerly known as PRO-Net, which is a computerized system to improve potential government contract and subcontract opportunities for interested small businesses. The program is an interactive database designed to be responsive to the requests of government agencies and major corporations for profiles of potential bidders.

It will permit small firms registered with DSBS to have their capabilities available when requests are made by Federal procurement officers or purchasing agents of prime contractors. Registration with DSBS is free and entirely voluntary, although it is required for those firms interested in SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, HUBZone Program or Small Disadvantaged Business Program. We recommend that all persons interested in doing business with the U. S. Government register with DSBS on-line via the Internet at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

Government subcontracts are also good market opportunities for small business. Large prime contractors have Small Business Liaison Officers (SBLO) listed in the Subcontracting Opportunities Directory as contact points for companies wishing to sell to them. This directory can be found on the Internet at <http://www.sba.gov/GC/indexcontacts-sbsd.html>. This web site also has a listing for SBA Commercial Market Representatives (CMRs) who can assist you in marketing to Federal prime contractors.

You may also wish to search the SBA SUB-Net Program for various listed subcontract opportunities at <http://web.sba.gov/subnet/>

Public Law 106-50 establishes goals for Veteran-owned and Service Disabled Veteran-owned Small Businesses. These goals are included in the federal government's major prime contractor's subcontracting plans. You are encouraged to contact the prime contractors' Small Business Liaison Officers (SBLOs) and inform them if you are a Service Disabled Veteran. The goal of 3% of the prime contractor's subcontracting dollars awarded to Service Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses is intended to help create sales opportunities for veteran-owned firms.

The HUBZone program is designed to promote business and job opportunity in economically distressed urban and rural areas by increasing federal contracting activity in those areas. HUBZone stands for Historically Underutilized Business zones.

The goal of the HUBZone program is to use federal contracts to stimulate business activity and to create jobs and investment in the areas that need assistance most--the economically distressed regions of our country.

To qualify, a small business' principal office must be in a HUBZone and at least 35 percent of its employees must reside in a HUBZone. The firm must also be completely owned and controlled by U.S. citizens. Contracts reserved for HUBZone firms can be awarded through competition limited to qualified HUBZone firms or on a sole-source basis. Another option allows contracting officers to give HUBZone firms a price preference in bidding open to non-HUBZone firms. You can find additional information about this program and apply for SBA HUBZone certification on the HUBZone home page at <http://www.sba.gov/hubzone/>

A minority owned firm might wish to apply to SBA for Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) certification status. This certification will assist the minority owned firm in its



marketing effort to the prime contractors. Information about the SDB Certification Program can be found at <http://www.sba.gov/sdb>

A minority or Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) can also apply to the SBA for entrance into the 8(a) Business Development Program. This program is designed to assist small businesses that are owned, controlled and daily managed by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The purpose of this program is to assist eligible 8(a) firms to enter the economic mainstream by providing them with federal contract, financial and management assistance. Additional information about this program's eligibility criteria and benefits can be found at: <http://www.sba.gov/8abd/>

The SBA Office of Women's Business Ownership has a web site that can be helpful to woman-owned firms. This web site can be reached at the following address: <http://www.womenbiz.gov/>. The SBA Office of Federal Contract Assistance for Women Business Owners web site, which serves as a gateway to over a 100 federal procurement and acquisition sites, can also be reached at: <http://www.womenbiz.gov/>. Additional federal procurement marketing information for woman-owned businesses can be obtained at the Women's Business Center on the Internet at: <http://www.onlinewbc.gov/>

A new procurement training course on how to access government contracts and subcontracts has been developed by SBA to assist small businesses. This course can be taken via the Internet by clicking on the following link:  
[http://www.sba.gov/gcbd/accessing\\_contracts/](http://www.sba.gov/gcbd/accessing_contracts/)

## **MARKETING ASSISTANCE**

Should you require in-depth counseling in seeking federal or state government contracts there are numerous Procurement and Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) throughout the country designed to help small, minority and woman-owned businesses market to the government. These organizations can help your firm register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR); obtain a CAGE Code and a Duns Number. This will be required to start doing business with the government. The PTACs also can match your firm's capability with procurement opportunities as well as help obtain military and federal specifications and drawings. A listing of PTAC organizations can be located at [http://www.sellingtothegovernment.net/ptac\\_map.asp](http://www.sellingtothegovernment.net/ptac_map.asp)

If you have any questions concerning SBA programs please do not hesitate to contact this office on telephone number (305) 536-5521 or by e-mail for procurement issues to: [barry.meltz@sba.gov](mailto:barry.meltz@sba.gov).

Sincerely,

***Barry Meltz - Procurement Center Representative -Commercial Market Representative  
U.S Small Business Administration – So. Florida District Office  
100 So. Biscayne Blvd. – 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Miami, Florida 33131***